
CHAPTER 3

BATTLE COMMAND

Battle command is the exercise of command in operations against a hostile, thinking enemy. It applies the leadership element of combat power to operations. Principally, battle command is an art that employs skills developed by professional study, constant practice, and considered judgment. Commanders, assisted by staff, visualize the operation, describe it in terms of intent and guidance, and direct the actions of subordinates within their intent. They direct operations in terms of the battlefield operating systems and directly influence operations by their physical presence supported by the command and control system. Command of the task force remains a personal function. The capabilities provided via communications and computers and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance within the C2 system allow rapid sharing of enemy and friendly information among all forces within the area of operation and enhance combat power by making combat forces more lethal and survivable. In addition, digitization provides the commander with an ability to lead and make decisions from anywhere on the battlefield while remaining linked to planning and preparation ongoing in the main CP.

Section I. THE ART OF COMMAND

Command is the authority that a commander lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank and assignment. Leaders possessing command authority strive to use it with firmness, care, and skill. Command is more an art than a science, although it exhibits characteristics of both. The "art of command" requires expert performance of a specific skill using intuitive faculties that the leader cannot gain solely by study or education. Command also requires a conscious and skillful exercise of authority to fulfill command responsibilities through decision-making and leadership.

3-1. ROLE OF THE COMMANDER

The task force commander's knowledge, experience, and personality determine how he interacts with his unit through the C2 system. The commander decides what he needs to do and the best method to do it, and he leads his unit to accomplish the mission. He drives the process through mission command. He establishes a command climate for his unit, prepares his unit for operations, commands his unit during operations, and assesses his subordinates. He establishes a system to meet the unique demands that he places on his unit, the abilities and personalities of his subordinates, and the capabilities of the equipment within the task force. The commander refines the C2 system and operates it based on his personality.

3-2. MISSION COMMAND

Mission command is the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based on mission orders for effective mission accomplishment. Mission orders leave the "how" of mission accomplishment to the subordinates by allowing them maximum freedom of planning and action to accomplish missions. Successful mission command

results from subordinate leaders exercising disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to accomplish missions. It requires an environment of trust and mutual understanding. The four elements of mission command are commander's intent, subordinate initiative, mission orders, and resource allocation.

a. **Commander's Intent.** Commander's intent is a clear, concise statement of what key tasks the unit must do and what conditions it must meet to succeed with respect to the enemy, terrain, and the desired end state. The commander formulates and communicates his intent to ensure unity of effort during operations, allowing subordinates to exercise disciplined initiative.

b. **Subordinate Initiative.** Initiative is the assumption of responsibility to decide and initiate independent actions when the commander's concept or order is no longer applicable or when an unanticipated opportunity leading to the accomplishment of the commander's intent presents itself. Subordinates decide how to achieve their assigned missions within the delegated freedom of action and the exercise of disciplined initiative during execution; however, they have an absolute responsibility to fulfill the commander's intent.

c. **Mission Orders.** A mission order is a technique for completing combat orders to allow subordinates maximum freedom of planning and action in accomplishing missions. The commander intervenes to direct coordination, restore operations, or exploit success. At a minimum, mission orders state--

- Task organization.
- Commander's intent and concept of operations.
- Unit mission.
- Subordinate unit missions.
- Mission-essential coordinating instructions.

d. **Resource Allocation.** The commander allocates appropriate resources to subordinates to accomplish their missions. The commander must also consider information and the INFOSYS as resources and allocate them through all levels of his command.

3-3. LOCATION OF THE COMMANDER

In the past, commanders have been torn between the conflicting requirement to visualize the battlefield and the requirement for his presence in the main command post to participate in the military decision-making process. This dilemma slowed the planning and execution of operations while frustrating the commander's efforts to "get out of the command post."

a. All commanders within the task force have the ability to visualize their battlespace in all dimensions and to share a common operational picture (COP). Perhaps the largest and most immediate impact of digitization is its effect on the operations process (plan, prepare for, execute, and assess operations). Digitization streamlines planning and preparation by allowing the near-simultaneous transfer of information to all leaders. This transfer of information facilitates parallel planning and preparation. Using digitized equipment should compress the planning cycle for commanders and allow planning at all levels to begin sooner. Task force commanders also have the ability to locate and track targets precisely and conduct simultaneous operations employing lethal and nonlethal means while operating with joint and multinational forces. In addition, task

force commanders retain the ability to recognize and protect their own and other friendly forces. The commander cannot, however, fully visualize the battlefield while directing and synchronizing the efforts of his task force from a computer screen at the main command post. He must move from the main CP to assess the situation face-to-face with subordinate commanders and soldiers. The C2 system within the task force permits a commander to position himself where he can best command without depriving himself of the ability to respond to opportunities and changing circumstances.

b. The commander can be virtually anywhere on the battlefield to best affect ongoing operations without disrupting the planning and preparation for future operations. Near-real-time information updates, continuous assessment, and command decisions can be briefed, approved, and disseminated from task force to company team level via the available INFOSYS with the C2 system.

3-4. COMBINING THE ART OF COMMAND AND THE SCIENCE OF CONTROL

The commander is the key to command and control within the task force. Foremost among his roles is his ability to combine the art of command and the science of control. He must use a methodology of visualizing the battlespace, describing his visualization to subordinates, directing action to achieve results, and leading the unit to mission accomplishment while conducting continuous assessment throughout the mission.

a. **Visualize.** The commander's visualization (Figure 3-1, page 3-4) is the core mental process that supports his decision-making and by which he combines the art of command and the science of control. It is the process of achieving a clear understanding of the current state of the task force with relation to the enemy and the environment, developing a desired end state that represents mission accomplishment, and determining the sequence of activities that moves the task force from its current state to the end state. The commander begins to visualize the desired end state when he receives a mission or perceives a change in the mission. He applies his current situational understanding to the received or perceived mission. As he analyzes or receives staff analysis of the mission, he develops a mental image of the friendly forces in relation to the enemy, the environment, and possible future operations at the conclusion of the operation. The commander's visualization is his assessment tool throughout the operation. He should focus on three main factors.

(1) Situational understanding is derived from applying his judgment, experience, expertise, and intuition to the COP and allows the commander to understand the current state of friendly and enemy forces. Situational understanding includes physical factors, human factors, and the relationships between friendly and enemy forces and the environment that represent potential opportunities or threats for the task force.

(2) The commander must identify a feasible outcome to the operation that results in mission success and leaves the task force postured for the next operation.

(3) The commander must identify the dynamics of opposing forces throughout the sequence of actions. This includes evaluating possible enemy reactions and friendly counteractions. This evaluation may lead to the identification of possible critical decision points throughout the operation.

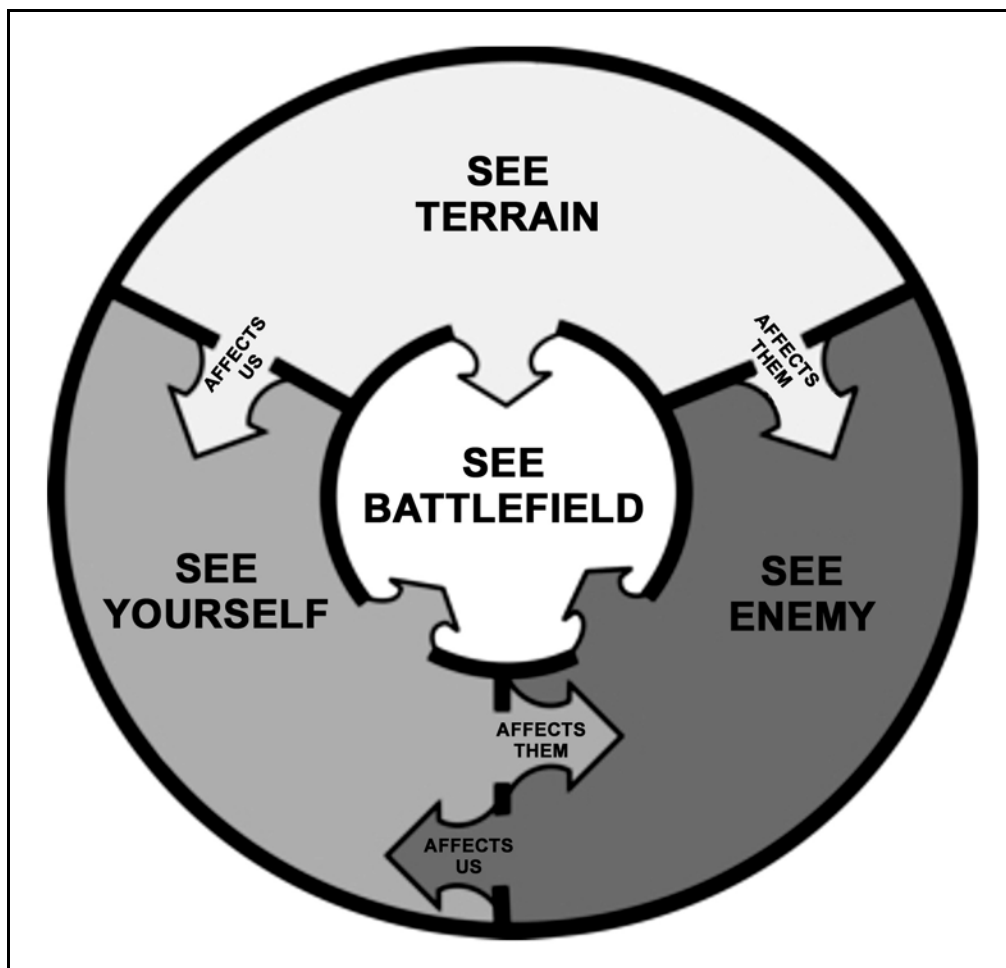


Figure 3-1. Visualization.

b. **Describe.** The commander describes his visualization continuously through the operations process. Specifically, his commander's intent, planning guidance, anticipated decision point(s), and commander's critical information requirements (CCIR) all serve to guide and focus the C2 system to support his decision-making and to communicate his decision for execution. INFOSYS are available to assist the commander in describing his visualization. However, he should not accept these products unquestioned. He must apply his judgment, experience, expertise, and intuition before making a decision and describing that decision to subordinates. During preparation, the commander uses the rehearsal to identify and discuss options at decision points, to synchronize activities within the TF and among subordinate units, and to add to his own visualization. The result may be further refinement of his intent and CCIR. During execution, the commander continues to visualize the implication of events, and he describes his conclusions to his staff and subordinates through updated CCIR and guidance.

c. **Direct.** The commander directs when he has made a decision and communicates that decision to his subordinates through an order.

(1) **Plan.** Orders should enable subordinates to understand their situation, their commander's mission and intent, and their own mission. The order (warning order [WARNO] or OPORD) should provide unity of effort in exercising disciplined initiative

by subordinate commanders. Clear direction is essential to mission success; however, commanders must strike a balance between *necessary but minimum direction* and *overly detailed direction*. The commander, or his staff, assigns graphical, written, or procedural control measures (permissive or restrictive) to prevent units from impeding one another and to impose necessary coordination. The commander should impose only the minimum control measures necessary to provide essential coordination and deconfliction among units.

(2) **Prepare.** The commander must update and validate his visualization during preparations as the results of ISR operations become available. He must determine whether new information (on enemy forces, friendly forces, or the environment) invalidates his plan, requires him to adjust the plan, or validates the plan with no further changes. The earlier the commander identifies the need for modifications the easier it is for him to incorporate and synchronize them into his plan. He describes the implications of his updated visualization on the plan and directs actions to effect his revisions through an order (WARNO, OPORD, or FRAGO).

(3) **Execute.** Execution includes a continuous process of assessing the current state of the operation and making adjustments to exploit opportunities and to account for unforeseen enemy actions. Combining the art of command and the science of control is most evident during execution. The commander exercises judgment and intuition continuously, assessing the situation and making decisions often with incomplete, conflicting, and vague information. Waiting for perfect information is rarely an option. During execution, the commander uses his visualization, continuously updated with a current COP, to ensure that his subordinate units execute appropriate measures for the actual situation. A major part of the "art of command" is to know when the plan must change and what criteria indicate a need for changes and then to determine what changes will maximize unit effectiveness. The commander directs these actions primarily through a FRAGO.

Section II. COMMAND AND CONTROL

Command and control consists of two components: the commander and the command and control system. The commander uses the command and control system to exercise C2 over forces to accomplish a mission.

3-5. THE COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM

The command and control system is the arrangement of personnel, information management, procedures, and equipment and facilities essential to the commander to plan, prepare for, execute, and assess operations.

a. **Personnel.** The command and control system in a task force begins with people. No amount of technology can reduce the importance of the human dimension since combat involves soldiers.

b. **Information Management.** Information management consists of information systems and relevant information (RI). INFOSYS provide an accuracy and reliability that can accelerate decision-making within the task force. INFOSYS also make mission execution efficient and effective, allowing the commanders and staffs to spend more time and energy on the art and human dimension of command and control.

c. **Procedures.** Procedures are standard and detailed sequences of activities within the task force to accomplish tasks. They govern actions within the command and control system to exercise command and control effectively and efficiently. Adhering to procedures minimizes confusion, misunderstanding, and hesitance as commanders rapidly shift forces to meet contingencies.

d. **Equipment and Facilities.** The equipment and facilities provide sustainment and a work environment for the other elements of the command and control systems.

3-6. DIGITIZATION AND THE C2 SYSTEM

The C2 system within a digitized task force is designed to collect, process, store, display, and disseminate the information needed to develop and refine a COP in support of a commander's mission. It supports a commander's exercise of command and control across the range of military operations.

a. The INFOSYS provide the commander and staff with the ability to plan, prepare, and execute using resilient voice and data communications networks to enable effective command and control on the battlefield. The TF integrates the INFOSYS through maneuver, fires and effects, logistics, force protection, information operations, and intelligence.

b. The INFOSYS within a digitized task force are organized to leverage fully the opportunities presented by near-real-time access to all RI and a near-complete COP. The INFOSYS provide all commanders within the task force with the capability to visualize and understand their area of operation in all its dimensions. It provides a shared COP of the situation, precisely locates and tracks friendly unit locations, highlights critical enemy locations, and synchronizes simultaneous operations with lethal and nonlethal means. This capability allows significantly enhanced synchronization of widely dispersed, highly mobile lethal forces in execution as well as in planning to mass effects.

3-7. EXERCISING COMMAND AND CONTROL

The task force commander must place the command and control system into action to exercise command and control. Exercising command and control is dynamic throughout the operations process.

a. Although planning, preparing, executing, and assessing occur continuously in operations, they need not occur sequentially. The task force must prepare to perform all four actions simultaneously, and the commander executing battle command is at the center of the process (Figure 3-2).

b. The operations process is execution-focused rather than planning-focused. INFOSYS compress planning to allow more time to focus on execution. The INFOSYS do this in two ways.

(1) The INFOSYS allow better parallel planning and collaboration among echelons within the task force.

(2) The INFOSYS provide a more accurate COP, allowing forces to execute faster with less detailed planning.

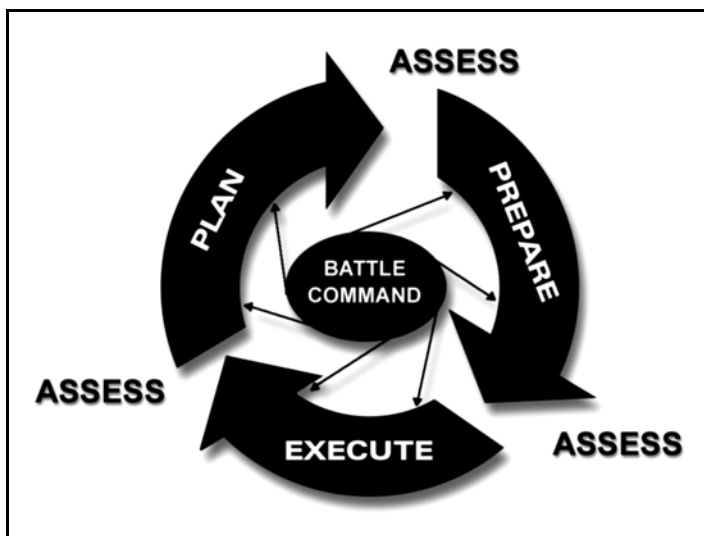


Figure 3-2. The operations process.

3-8. DISTRIBUTION OF TASK FORCE COMMAND AND CONTROL

The TF's staff sections are normally distributed among four command and control organizations: the command group, main command post, combat trains command post, and rear command post (forward support company command post). The TF commander organizes the staff within each command post to perform essential staff functions to aid him with planning and in controlling operations. These command and control organizations are normally positioned within the TF's AO to maintain flexibility, redundancy, survivability, and mobility (see Chapter 11, Command Post Operations).

a. **Command Group.** The command group consists of the commander and whomever else he designates. This may include the fire support officer and air liaison officer. The purpose of the command group is the direct command and control of the task force. The command group is not a permanent organization; rather, it is formed anytime the commander goes forward to control an operation. The command group is equipped to operate wherever the commander feels it is necessary to influence operations with rapid decisions and orders. The commander determines the actual placement of personnel within the command group.

(1) The commander fights the battle from the command group and normally positions himself near the most critical event, usually with the main effort headquarters. From this forward location, the commander is better able to observe critical events, maintain communications, and sense the battle. The commander therefore leverages the INFOSYS to untether himself from the main CP so he can compare reality to his visualization of his subordinates and the terrain he is to fight on without affecting his decision-making ability.

(2) The commander considers the following in determining his location on the battlefield:

- Linkage of the INFOSYS (Army battle command system [ABCS] in digitized task forces) to make timely decisions, including the ability to judge the progress and condition of his forces. Within technical limitations, communications systems adapt to the needs of the commander, not vice versa.
- Time and location of critical events and decision points that have the greatest impact on mission accomplishment. Ideally, the commander selects a location where he can observe the conditions that aid in making a critical decision.
- Security for the command group, including the commander's personal protection.

b. **Main Command Post.** The main CP is the task force commander's principal command and control facility. The main CP moves as required to maintain control of the operation. In linear operations environments, it locates behind the company team CPs and, if possible, out of medium artillery range. In nonlinear operations (noncontiguous areas of operations), it locates where it can best support TF operations and where it is least vulnerable to potential hostile actions. The TF XO is responsible for supervising all staff activities and functions within the main CP. The main CP provides the following functions:

- Synchronizes combat, combat support, and combat service support activities in support of the overall operation.
- Provides a focal point for the development of intelligence.
- Supports situational understanding for the TF commander and subordinates by monitoring, analyzing, and disseminating information.
- Monitors and anticipates the commander's decision points.
- Plans future operations.
- Monitors sustaining operations.
- Coordinates with higher headquarters and adjacent units.
- Keeps higher headquarters informed.
- Serves as net control station for the operations and intelligence (OI) radio net and backup net control station for the command radio net.
- Provides terrain management.
- Provides a stable, secure planning facility.
- Produces and disseminates the commander's orders.
- Plans and controls ISR operations.

c. **Combat Trains Command Post.** The combat trains command post controls and coordinates the administrative and logistical support for the task force. The CTCP consists of the HHC commander and the TF S1 and S4. The unit maintenance collection point, battalion aid station, and forward support company forward cell will typically collocate with the CTCP. The TF S1 and S4 work closely with the FSC support operations officer to coordinate combat service support for the TF. The CTCP serves the following functions:

- Tracks the current battle.
- Controls sustainment operations.

- Provides combat service support representation to the main CP for planning and integration.
- Forecasts and coordinates future requirements.
- Monitors main supply routes (MSRs) and controls combat service support traffic.
- Coordinates the evacuation of casualties, equipment, and enemy prisoners of war.

d. **Forward Support Company Command Post (Field Trains Command Post in AOE Organizations).** The FSC CP controls the execution of resupply and maintenance support. It coordinates with the forward support medical company for medical evacuation operations for the task force. The FSC CP--

- Tracks the current battle.
- Provides CSS representation to the main CP for planning and integration.
- Forecasts and coordinates with the FSB for future requirements.
- Monitors main supply routes.
- Coordinates the evacuation of casualties, equipment, and enemy prisoners of war to the FSB.
- Coordinates the movement of the task force support area with the main CP.

Section III. PLANNING FOR OPERATIONS

Planning for operations leads to a commander making decisions during execution. At its core, decision-making is knowing "if" to decide, then "when" and "what" to decide. It includes understanding the consequences of decisions. Decisions are the means by which the commander translates his vision of the end state into action. Decision-making is both science and art. Many aspects of military operations (movement rates, fuel consumption, and weapons effects) are quantifiable and, therefore, part of the *science* of war. Other aspects--the impact of leadership, complexity of operations, and uncertainty regarding enemy intentions--belong to the *art* of war. The military decision-making process is an established and proven analytical process. The MDMP adapts the Army's analytical approach to problem solving. It is a tool that assists the commander and staff in developing estimates and a plan. The digitization of the Army and its battlefield operating systems has not changed the steps of the MDMP; it has enhanced them. While the formal problem-solving process may start with the receipt of a mission and have as its goal the production of an order, the analytical aspect of the MDMP is continuous throughout operations (including execution) with constant feedback and updates of information.

3-9. INFORMATION SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT TO DECISION-MAKING

The INFOSYS available in digitized organizations enhance both the science and the art of war in two primary ways.

a. **Enhanced Situational Understanding.** First, digital INFOSYS provide commanders and staffs with a better understanding of their area of operation. They help collect information more effectively; process it faster and more accurately; store it in a manner that provides instant access; display it in a more usable, tailored, and current format; and disseminate it to the right place faster, with fewer errors and less lag time, than analog information systems. The digital INFOSYS and information management make estimates more accurate, complete, and current than was possible with analog

information systems. Creating and maintaining a current, complete COP is essential to the MDMP and is the foundation for the commander's continuing visualization and all staff estimates.

b. **Enhanced Parallel Planning and Collaboration.** The second area in which these systems improve the MDMP is in parallel planning and collaboration. Parallel planning occurs when two echelons conduct their planning nearly simultaneously. Parallel planning can happen only when higher headquarters produces timely warning orders and shares information with subordinate headquarters as it becomes available. Parallel planning allows each echelon to make maximum use of time available. It requires significant interaction between echelons. Collaboration (paragraph 3-25, Coordination and Liaison) is the real-time interaction of commanders and staffs at two or more echelons. Collaboration is facilitated by digital INFOSYS that allow real-time exchange of data and voice so that commanders and staffs can work together during all aspects of planning. However, the digital INFOSYS cannot, and should not, replace a commander's face-to-face collaboration with his subordinates.

c. **Additional Information Processing Enhancements.** The digital INFOSYS improve the timelines to conduct full planning and will assist the commander with his understanding. (Figure 3-3 illustrates the cognitive hierarchy.) The commander and staff must process the information available to them.

(1) Processing raises the meaning of information from data to understanding. Data is organized and processed to create databases of information. Processing takes the data and adds meaning to the relevant information in the database using progressively higher levels of complex and cognitive methods to create an operational picture. The staff then takes the operational picture and refines it based on the commander's guidance. The product of this refinement is a common operational picture (COP).

(2) Processing also includes lower-level mechanical methods such as organizing, collating, plotting, and arranging data and information. However, effective processing requires analysis and evaluation (higher-level cognitive methods) for data to become knowledge. Through its estimates, the staff creates knowledge for the commander. The commander then applies his judgment to the staff estimates and the COP and formulates his understanding. Processing depends primarily on well-trained and adaptive analysts to provide insight. To achieve understanding, decision-makers apply judgment to the knowledge and the staff estimates. Understanding enables informed decisions with less-than-perfect data. Understanding generates action; with understanding and a mission, a commander can better visualize his area of operation and take action by issuing his commanders' intent and guidance and determining his CCIR.

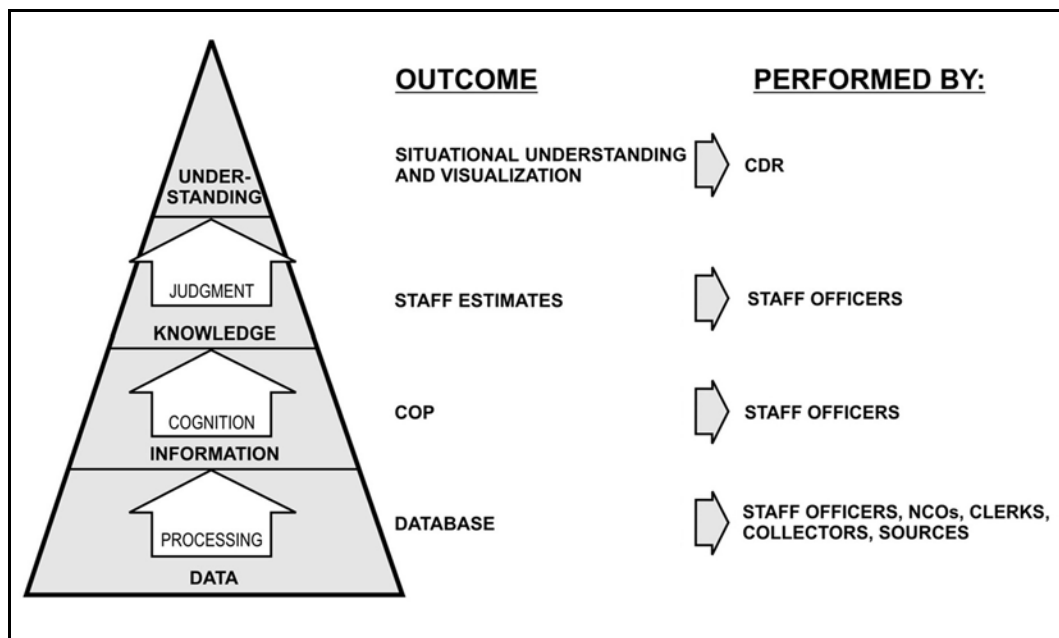


Figure 3-3. Cognitive hierarchy.

3-10. THE MILITARY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The MDMP is an established and proven analytical process; however, it is a detailed, deliberate, and sequential process optimally used when adequate planning time and sufficient staff support are available to develop and thoroughly examine numerous friendly and enemy courses of action. The commander and staff typically conduct this examination when developing the commander's visualization and operation plans, when planning for an entirely new mission, and during extended operations. The underlying concurrent processes of intelligence preparation of the battlefield, risk assessment (see Appendix D, Risk Management and Fratricide Avoidance and Appendix E, Environmental Concerns), targeting, force protection, and military deception planning provide the information that is used as part of the standardized planning in the MDMP. The MDMP helps the commander and staff to examine a specific situation and reach a logical decision by applying thoroughness, clarity, sound judgment, logic, and professional knowledge. The MDMP is the foundation on which planning in a time-constrained environment is based. The products created during the MDMP can and should be used during subsequent planning sessions when time may not be available for a thorough reexamination but when significant parts of existing information and analysis of METT-TC factors have not changed substantially.

a. The MDMP relies on doctrine, especially the terms and symbols (graphics) consolidated in FM 101-5-1. The professional understanding of a defined common lexicon particular to the profession of arms and the Army is essential to the MDMP. Using approved terms and symbols facilitates the rapid and consistent assessment of the situation and the creation and implementation of plans and orders by minimizing confusion over the meanings of terms and symbols used in the process.

b. The following are advantages of using the unabbreviated MDMP:

- It analyzes and compares multiple friendly and enemy COAs in an attempt to identify the best possible friendly COA.
 - It produces the greatest coordination and synchronization and minimizes the risk of overlooking a critical aspect of the operation.
 - It results in a detailed operation order or operation plan.
- c. The disadvantage of using the unabbreviated MDMP is that it is a time-consuming process.

3-11. ROLES OF THE COMMANDER AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The commander is in charge of the military decision-making process. He decides what procedures within the MDMP to use in each situation, including whether or not to use collaborative planning. The commander's intent is the driving force behind the MDMP, which hinges on a clear articulation of the commander's visualization. The INFOSYS provide the commander with an unprecedented level and quality of information that help focus his attention on the critical elements of the situation and enable him to understand better the environment in which he is operating.

a. The commander is personally responsible for planning, preparing, and executing operations. From start to finish, the commander's personal role is central. His participation in the process provides focus and guidance to the staff; however, there are responsibilities and decisions that are the commander's alone. The amount of his direct involvement is driven by the time available, his personal preferences, and the experience and accessibility of the staff. The less time available and the less experienced the staff the greater the commander's involvement. When the commander is linked with his staff by the INFOSYS, he is more accessible and has more tools to provide guidance and to stay involved in the process regardless of his location within the area of operations.

b. During the MDMP, the commander uses the entire staff to explore the full range of probable and likely enemy and friendly courses of action and to analyze and compare his own organization's capabilities with those of the enemy. This staff effort has one objective: to integrate information collectively with sound doctrine and technical competence, which assists the commander in his decisions and ultimately leads to effective execution. Through the use of INFOSYS, the commander guides not only the staff but also subordinate commanders. He also uses the INFOSYS to access additional data from national or higher echelons to help in analyzing both the environment in which he is operating and the enemy.

c. The executive officer manages, coordinates, and disciplines the staff's work and provides quality control. He must understand the commander's guidance and intent because he supervises the entire process. The XO ensures the staff has the information, guidance from the commander, and facilities that it needs. He determines timelines for the staff, establishes briefback times and locations, enforces the information management plan, and provides any unique instructions to guide the staff in completing the MDMP process.

d. Warning orders are used to facilitate parallel planning. By issuing guidance and participating in formal and informal briefings, the commander and XO guide the staff through the decision-making process. In a collaborative environment, the commander can extend this participation directly to subordinate commanders and staffs. Such interaction helps the staff and subordinates to resolve questions and involves all staff and

subordinates in the complete process. The selected course of action and its implementing operation order are directly linked to how well both the commander and the staff accomplish each step of the MDMP.

3-12. THE ROLE OF INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE (ISR)

The task force commander deploys the ISR assets (primarily the scout platoon) early in the planning process to facilitate early intelligence collection. However, the scout platoon should not be deployed without first considering, as a minimum, the doctrinal ISR concepts found in Chapter 4.

a. The commander and staff analyze the information collected from the scout platoon and other ISR assets and incorporate this information into the planning process. The commander and staff ensure ISR operations are continuous during planning, preparation, and execution of the mission. Information collected during ISR operations may result in initial plans or courses of action being modified or even discarded. The earlier the need for modifications can be identified, the easier it is to incorporate and synchronize the modifications into the plan. Further, when the situation changes, the commander must modify his ISR objective accordingly.

b. ISR assists significantly in developing courses of action. Conducted early in the planning process, it can help confirm or deny the commander's initial assessment (visualization). Information may also allow him to focus immediately on a specific course of action or to eliminate courses of action that reconnaissance shows to be infeasible.

c. When conducting ISR operations, the commander must determine if the benefits outweigh the risks. During defensive, stability, and support operations, the ISR operations can often be conducted with little risk. During offensive operations, ISR operations involve substantial risk.

Section IV. THE MILITARY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The MDMP is a single, established, and proven analytical process. The complete MDMP is described in FM 101-5. It is a seven-step process that is summarized in this section. Each step of the MDMP builds upon the outputs from previous steps, and each step, in turn, produces its own output that drives subsequent steps (Figure 3-4, page 3-14). Errors committed early in the process affect later steps. Each staff section does estimates and estimates go on continuously to provide important inputs to the MDMP. Estimates and database updates support the planning process as well as mission execution.

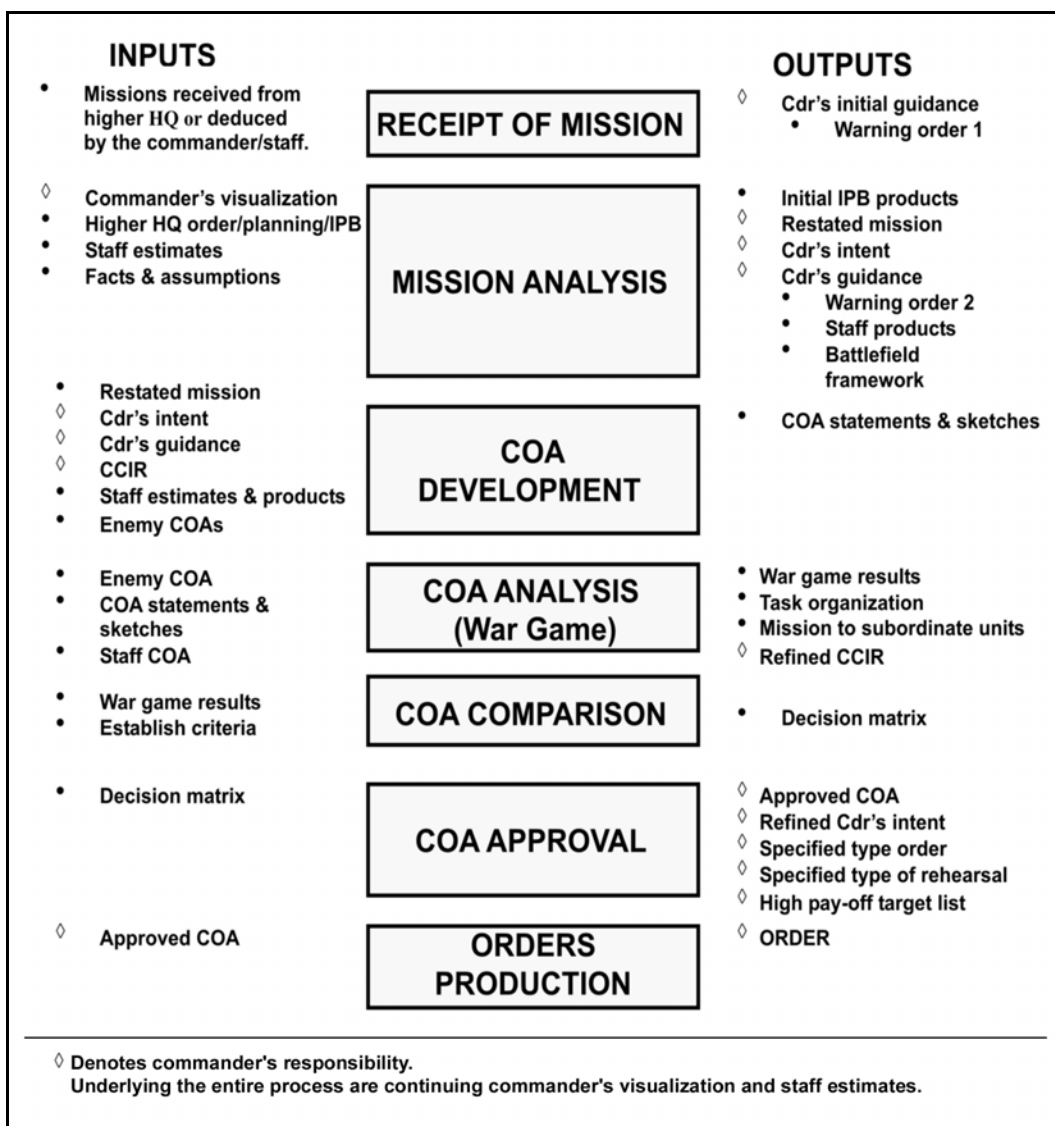


Figure 3-4. MDMP steps, inputs, and outputs.

3-13. RECEIPT OF MISSION

The staff receives a new mission from higher headquarters, or the commander recognizes an opportunity that requires a significant change to the current operation. The staff begins to collect the data and resources necessary to conduct mission analysis. The XO develops the timeline to structure the staff's efforts, and the task force commander issues initial guidance to his staff that focuses them on developing initial CCIR, authorized movement, level of detail required in the MDMP, and initial reconnaissance requirements. The result of this step is a WARNO that alerts subordinate units to an impending mission change.

3-14. MISSION ANALYSIS

Mission analysis defines the tactical problem and begins the process of determining feasible solutions. Analysis of the higher headquarters' mission is the start point that generates the IPB. It then analyzes the specified, implied, and essential tasks laid out in the higher headquarters' order. It reviews the available assets, identifies critical facts and

assumptions, and evaluates risk. The results of mission analysis are the initial CCIR, an ISR plan, the task force's mission, the task force commander's initial intent for the operation, and the task force commander's guidance for the staff on developing COAs. These products are distributed to subordinates in the form of WARNO #2 to include orders to initiate reconnaissance operations

3-15. COURSE OF ACTION DEVELOPMENT

The staff develops COAs for analysis and comparison. This begins with analyzing relative combat power and generating maneuver options. The staff arrays initial forces to accomplish critical tactical tasks and develops the scheme of maneuver that synchronizes the tasks using the battlefield framework. The final result is a COA statement and sketch that clearly portrays how the task force will accomplish the mission, and explains the scheme of maneuver. The COA statement and sketch serves as the basis for the COA analysis war game.

3-16. COURSE OF ACTION ANALYSIS (WAR GAME)

The staff develops a set of standards used to evaluate each COA. The standards may be based on the principles of war, commander's guidance, doctrinal principles for the operation being conducted, or whatever measure is deemed important by the commander. The staff conducts a war game of each COA using an action, reaction, and counteraction methodology. This process allows them to view the likely outcome of the battle, allocate resources, synchronize BOS, and develop control measures. The results of each war game are assessed using evaluation criteria established by the commander and recorded for comparison against other COAs.

3-17. COURSE OF ACTION COMPARISON

The staff evaluates each course of action and compares it against the others to determine which one best accomplishes the mission without undue risk. Each COA is briefed to the commander, and the staff makes its recommendation on the most preferred option.

3-18. COURSE OF ACTION APPROVAL

The task force commander selects a COA, modifies it as required to better meet his intent, or rejects them all and has the staff develop new ones. The commander then finalizes his intent and CCIR based on the chosen COA. He gives guidance to the staff on the type of order to produce, rehearsals to conduct, and priorities for CS and CSS assets. The staff issues WARNO #3 reflecting these changes.

3-19. ORDERS PRODUCTION

The staff finalizes the plan based on the commander's approval guidance and prepares to publish a written order, brief an oral order, transmit a digital order, or a combination thereof. The order includes graphical overlays and staff annexes as appropriate.

3-20. DECISION-MAKING IN A TIME-CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENT

The MDMP is the foundation on which planning in a time-constrained environment is based. The products created during the MDMP can and should be used during subsequent planning sessions when time may not be available for a thorough re-examination but

when significant parts of existing information and analysis of the factors of METT-TC have not changed substantially. The focus of any planning process should be to develop quickly a flexible, tactically sound, fully integrated, and fully synchronized plan that increases the likelihood of mission success with the fewest possible casualties. However, any operation may go beyond the initial plan. The most detailed staff estimates cannot anticipate every possible branch or sequel, enemy action, unexpected opportunity, or change in mission directed from higher headquarters. Fleeting opportunities or unexpected enemy actions may require a quick decision to implement a new or modified plan. The commander decides how to abbreviate the MDMP. What follows are suggested techniques and procedures that will save time. They are not exhaustive nor the only ways to save time, but they have proven useful. These techniques are not necessarily sequential in nature nor are all of them useful in all situations. What works for a unit depends on its proficiency and the factors of METT-TC in a given situation. The commander can use these, or techniques of his own choosing, to abbreviate the process.

a. **Training for the MDMP.** Before a unit can conduct decision-making in a time-constrained environment, it must master all of the steps in the MDMP. A unit can only shorten the MDMP if it fully understands the role of each and every step of the process and the requirements to produce the necessary products. Training on these steps must be thorough and result in a series of staff battle drills that can be tailored to the time available. Training on the MDMP must be stressful and replicate realistic conditions and timelines. Although the task is difficult, all staffs must be able to produce a simple, flexible, tactically sound plan in a time-constrained environment. Any METT-TC factor, but especially limited time, may make it difficult to follow the entire MDMP. An inflexible process used in all situations will not work. The MDMP is a sound and proven process that can be modified with slightly different techniques to be effective when time is limited. There is still only one process, however, and omitting steps of the MDMP is not the solution. Anticipation, organization, and prior preparation are the keys to success in a time-constrained environment.

b. **General Considerations.** The MDMP is abbreviated when there is too little time for a thorough and comprehensive application of the process. The most significant factor to consider is time. It is the only nonrenewable--and often the most critical--resource.

(1) There are four primary techniques to save time.

(a) The first is to increase the task force commander's involvement, allowing him to make decisions during the process without waiting for detailed briefings after each step.

(b) The second technique is for the commander to become more prescriptive in his guidance by limiting options. This saves the staff time by focusing members on those things the commander feels are most important.

(c) The third technique, and the one that saves the most time, is for the commander to limit the number of courses of action developed and war-gamed. He can also direct only one course of action for the staff to refine if he has personally and mentally conducted the MDMP to come up with his acceptable course of action.

(d) The fourth technique is maximizing parallel planning. Although parallel planning is the norm during the MDMP, maximizing its use in a time-constrained environment is critical.

(2) In a time-constrained environment, the importance of warning orders increases as available time decreases. A verbal warning order now, followed by a written order later

(or posted to a database), is worth more than a written order one hour from now. The same warning orders used in the MDMP should be issued when abbreviating the process. In addition to warning orders, units must share all available information with subordinates, especially IPB products, as early as possible. The digital INFOSYS greatly increase this sharing of information and the commander's visualization through collaboration with his subordinates.

(3) While the steps used in a time-constrained environment are the same, many of them may be done mentally by the task force commander or with less staff involvement than during the MDMP. The products developed when the process is abbreviated may be the same as those developed for the MDMP; however, they may be much less detailed and some may be omitted altogether. Unit SOPs tailor this process to the commander's preference for orders in this environment.

(4) When developing the plan, the staff may initially use the MDMP and develop branches and sequels. During execution, they may abbreviate the process. A unit may use the complete process to develop the plan while a subordinate headquarters abbreviates the process.

(a) *Advantages of Abbreviating the MDMP.* The advantages of using the abbreviated MDMP include the following:

- It maximizes the use of available time.
- It allows subordinates more planning and preparation time.
- It focuses staff efforts on the commander's specific and directive guidance.
- It facilitates adaptation to a rapidly changing situation.
- It compensates for an inexperienced staff.

(b) *Disadvantages of Abbreviating the MDMP.* The disadvantages of using the abbreviated MDMP include the following:

- It is much more directive and limits staff flexibility and initiative.
- It does not explore all available options when developing friendly courses of action.
- It may result in only an oral OPORD or FRAGO.
- It increases the risk of overlooking a key factor or failing to uncover a significantly better option.
- It may decrease the coordination and synchronization of the plan.

(c) *Benefits of Saving Time on MDMP Steps.* The benefits of saving time on the MDMP steps include the following:

- It refines more thoroughly the commander's plan.
- It conducts a more deliberate and detailed war gaming session.
- It considers in detail potential branches and sequels.
- It focuses more on actually rehearsing and preparing the plan.

c. **The Commander's Role.** The task force commander decides what adjustments to make to the MDMP, giving specific guidance to the staff to focus the process and save time. If the commander has access to only a small portion of the staff or none at all, he will need to rely even more on his own expertise, intuition, creativity, and understanding of the environment and the art and science of warfare. He may have to decide on his course of action, mentally war-game the outcome, and confirm his decision to the staff all in a relatively short time. If so, his decision will be based more on his experience than on a formal integrated staff process. The commander may elect to have the staff spend most

of its time developing, refining, and war-gaming his course of action rather than developing multiple courses of action.

(1) The commander should avoid changes to his guidance unless a significantly changed situation dictates major revisions. Frequent minor changes to the guidance can result in lost time as the staff makes constant minor adjustments to the plan.

(2) The commander may consult with subordinate commanders before making a decision. Subordinate commanders are closer to the fight and can more accurately portray the enemy's situation and that of their own unit. Additionally, consulting with subordinates gives them insight into the upcoming operation and allows them to maximize parallel planning. Using the digital INFOSYS (primarily FBCB2) greatly enhances this concept of maximizing parallel planning between the task force and the subordinate units.

(3) In situations where the task force commander must decide quickly, he should contact his higher headquarters and advise them of his selected course of action, if time is available, because it may affect the branches and sequels that his superiors are planning. However, the commander should not sacrifice exploiting an opportunity if he cannot contact higher headquarters.

d. **The Staff's Role.** The importance of staff estimates increases as time decreases. Decision-making in a time-constrained environment almost always takes place after a unit has entered the area of operations and has begun to execute operations. This means that the IPB, an updated COP, and some portion of the staff estimates should already exist. Detailed planning before operations provides the basis for information that the commander will need to make decisions as operations continue. Staff members must keep their estimates up-to-date so that when planning time is limited, they can provide accurate assessments quickly and move directly into course of action development. When time is short, the commander and staff use as much of the previously analyzed information and products from earlier decisions as possible. Although some of these products may change significantly, many (such as the IPB that is continuously updated) remain the same or require little change.

(1) The staff must use every opportunity to maximize parallel planning with the unit's higher headquarters. Maximizing parallel planning can save significant time but if not carefully managed it can also waste time. As a general rule, the staff must never get ahead of the higher headquarters in the planning process. The majority of the planning time should be spent developing the foundation of the plan, such as mission analysis. The staff should not develop and analyze courses of action without specific guidance and approval from higher headquarters.

(2) Collaborative planning may be used to further speed up decision-making. Collaborative planning facilitates subordinate parallel planning and takes advantage of the subordinates' intimate knowledge of their area of operations and associated threats and opportunities. Collaborative planning among staffs is plausible; however, there will often be tension between taking a commander away from an ongoing fight and the need to involve him in collaborative planning. Only the task force commander can determine which takes precedence and require a subordinate commander to participate in a collaborative planning session. The higher commander may direct that headquarters and a task force headquarters collaborate.

e. **Receipt of Mission.** This part of the process does not change in a time-constrained environment. However, the commander decides at this step whether or not to abbreviate the MDMP and, if so, specifies how he wants to do it.

f. **Mission Analysis.** The commander's direct involvement is essential to saving time during mission analysis. He must personally supervise and manage the mission analysis. If time is not available to conduct a detailed mission analysis, the commander, staff, and subordinate commanders (if collaborative tools are available) perform a rapid mission analysis. In extreme circumstances, mission analysis may be a mental process conducted by the commander and key staff. This should be the exception rather than the norm.

(1) The IPB process requires constant attention. Many delays during mission analysis can be traced to poorly conducted IPB. The S2 must quickly update the IPB based on the new mission and changed situation. This is critical to focus ISR assets, especially the scout platoon, and other ISR assets early to collect information that confirms adjustments to the initial plan. Event templates must be as complete as possible prior to the mission analysis briefing. Because event templates are the basis for war gaming, they must be constantly updated as new information becomes available.

(2) Staff officers conduct as formal a mission analysis briefing as time allows. However, they may be forced to brief their estimates orally, covering only information that has changed from the last staff estimate while placing the remainder of the information on a shared database. When severely time-constrained, they brief only critical information that directly affects the new mission. If the commander has been directly involved in the mission analysis, he may decide to skip the mission analysis briefing completely.

g. **Commander's Guidance.** One way to save time is in the issuance of the commander's guidance. The elements of the commander's guidance may be the same as the MDMP, but the guidance is much more detailed and directive. The commander can provide detailed information outlining what he expects in each course of action developed, including tentative task organization, decision points, and scheme of maneuver. He may also determine which enemy courses of action he wants to war-game as well as the branches or sequels he wants incorporated in each course of action. Detailed guidance keeps the staff focused by establishing parameters within which to work. Commander's guidance must be constantly reviewed and analyzed. As the situation changes and information becomes available, the commander may need to update or alter his guidance. This type of detailed guidance limits the staff's flexibility and initiative to save time, but it allows the staff more time to synchronize the course of action during the war gaming session. Once the guidance is issued, the staff immediately sends a WARNO to subordinate units. Alternatively, if subordinate commanders and staffs are part of a collaborative process, they get this updated guidance during the collaborative session. However, the staff must still capture this guidance and publish it in a WARNO.

h. **Course of Action Development.** A significant amount of time is gained by increased commander involvement in course of action development, resulting in detailed and directive commander's guidance. The greatest savings in time for the MDMP comes from the commander directing the staff to develop only a few courses of action (or a single course of action) instead of many.

(1) The task force commander and selected staff (to include selected subordinate commanders and staffs, if collaborative tools are available) save additional time by conducting a hasty war game once the courses of action are developed. The hasty war game allows the commander to determine if he favors one or more courses of action out of several proposed. It develops and matures one or more courses of action prior to the detailed war gaming session. If the commander cannot be present during the hasty war gaming session, then the staff conducts a course of action backbrief to the commander after the hasty war game. From the hasty war gaming session, the commander can make an early decision, allowing him to refine his course of action and make any necessary adjustments prior to the detailed war game. In extreme situations, this may be the only opportunity to conduct the war game process.

(2) The hasty war game can also be used to select a single course of action for further development. A commander's early decision to go with a single course of action allows his staff and subordinates to focus on the selected course of action instead of on multiple courses of action. It also allows the staff to concentrate on synchronizing the course of action rather than on continuing to develop it during the detailed war gaming session.

(3) When time is severely limited, the quickest process comes from the commander personally deciding to immediately begin developing one COA with branch plans against the enemy's most probable course of action. This decision is often intuitive and relies on the commander's experience and judgment to render a quick decision. The commander determines which staff officers are critical to assist him in this process, depending on the type of operation being planned. The minimum is normally the XO, S3, S2, and fire support coordinator. The commander may also include subordinate commanders, if available, either in person or through collaborative tools. This team must quickly develop a flexible course of action that it believes will accomplish the mission. In this case, the commander mentally war-games one or more courses of action, selecting the first one that appears to solve the problem for the staff to refine.

(4) Limiting the number of courses of action developed carries with it the risk of overlooking a significantly better course of action. Developing only one course of action is a risky approach. It provides the staff with little flexibility to apply its creativity and to explore options.

i. **Course of Action Analysis.** The commander and staff must war-game the courses of action to ensure all elements are fully integrated and synchronized. An early decision to limit the number of courses of action to be war-gamed, or to develop only one course of action, saves the greatest amount of time in this process. When war-gaming the courses of action, it is best to do so against all feasible enemy courses of action. However, the commander can save additional time by having the staff war-game against a smaller number of enemy courses of action. At a minimum, the actions at the decisive point must be war-gamed against the enemy's most probable course of action.

(1) The commander's direct involvement saves significant time in this step by allowing the staff to focus on only the most essential aspects of the war game. The commander can supervise the war gaming session and be prepared to make decisions, provide guidance, delete unsatisfactory concepts, and assist in keeping the staff focused. If the commander is present during the war gaming of multiple courses of action, he may identify the course of action he favors. He can then discard unwanted courses of action, allocating more time to refine the one selected.

(2) The commander must always assess risk. By limiting the number of courses of action, he has increased risk to the command. He must evaluate the course of action to ensure it will not render the force incapable of anticipated operations or lower the unit's combat effectiveness beyond acceptable levels.

(3) The staff should use the box technique, focusing first on the decisive action such as actions at the objective or the engagement area. If time permits, the staff war-games other critical events or boxes as well. The commander and staff must identify and prioritize the critical events they want analyzed. Analyzing essential tasks can identify these critical events.

(4) Staff officers save time if they specifically define and limit the evaluation criteria before they begin the war gaming session. The commander can greatly increase effectiveness here by specifying the most critical factors and their weighting to his selected course of action. Significant factors can be quantified, if possible, and limited to the four or five most important based on the mission statement, commander's intent, and commander's guidance.

(5) The staff works to support the commander's plan. However, as the staff refines the plan, it cannot become so biased that it develops a plan that is infeasible and unsupportable. If the staff determines that it cannot support the commander's plan, a new course of action must be developed.

(6) The use of recorders is particularly important. Recorders should be trained to capture coordinating instructions, subunit tasks and purposes, and information required to synchronize the operation during the war gaming session. If this occurs, a portion of the order is written before the planning process is complete. The digital INFOSYS greatly simplify this process as information can be entered in preformatted forms in shared databases that represent either briefing charts or actual appendices to orders. Each staff section should have formats available to facilitate a networked production of orders.

(7) The location used for the war gaming session must be prepared and configured by the time the staff is ready to conduct the war gaming session. Charts and boards must be clean and ready for use. The blown-up terrain sketch and enemy situation templates must be prepared and present for the war gaming session. If equipped with digital INFOSYS, automated briefing products must be updated, digital terrain maps for the area of operations loaded in the appropriate INFOSYS, and automated tools (if available) for war gaming must have correct data entered.

(8) When only one course of action is developed, the purpose of the course of action analysis is to verify, refine, synchronize, and integrate the commander's course of action and recommend modifications as necessary. However, the analysis should follow the detailed war gaming process as much as possible to assist the commander in visualizing the outcome and identifying potential branches and sequels. As time allows, the staff can further war-game and develop these branches and sequels.

(9) In a severely time-constrained environment, and if automated tools are available, units may combine the war gaming process with the rehearsal in a virtual environment, including both the commander and staff and subordinate commanders and staffs. A significant benefit to this technique is that it allows the subordinate commanders to control their units during the war gaming process.

j. **Course of Action Comparison.** If the commander decides to war-game only one course of action, or if he chooses one during the war gaming session, no course of action

comparison is needed. If multiple courses of action have been war-gamed and the commander has not made a decision, the staff must conduct the course of action comparison. Limiting the evaluation criteria and weighting factors are the only significant shortcuts in this step.

k. **Course of Action Approval.** If the commander has observed and participated in the planning process, the decision may be rapidly apparent and the commander can make it on the spot. If the commander has not participated in the process to this point or has not made a decision, a decision briefing is required. Good course of action comparison charts and sketches assist the commander in visualizing and distinguishing between courses of action. The staff must ensure the courses of action meet the course of action criterion, *complete*. Time can also be saved by limiting the course of action briefing to only the decisive action or selected critical points. If only one course of action was developed, no decision is required unless the developed course of action becomes unsuitable, infeasible, or unacceptable. If this occurs, another course of action must be developed.

l. **Orders Production.** In a time-constrained environment, time is important and a verbal FRAGO may be issued first versus a written order. However, the staff must capture all the information in any verbal orders and warning orders and deliver a written order to follow up on any previously issued orders. If digitally equipped, the staff sends the FRAGO over the appropriate digital INFOSYS (most likely FBCB2). Once the decision is made that a verbal order is not issued, the staff immediately sends out a WARNO.

Section V. PREPARING FOR OPERATIONS

Preparing for operations includes activities conducted by the task force before executing to improve its ability to conduct an operation. At a minimum, these activities include: plan refinement, rehearsals, ISR operations, coordination, inspections, and movement. Preparation occurs any time the task force is not executing. Ideally, preparation begins with the receipt of an order (as does planning) and ends as execution begins. Assessment during preparation monitors the progress of readiness to conduct. The commander evaluates preparations against his criteria for success to determine variances and to forecast the significance of those variances for mission accomplishment.

3-21. INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS

During preparation, the task force commander answers some of his CCIR and improves his intelligence about the enemy and terrain through his available ISR assets (most likely the scout platoon). An ISR operation is planned and executed with the same level of importance as any operation. ISR operations are not static, one-time efforts that achieve a single goal and then end. As the scout platoon (or other available ISR assets) gathers information (answering the CCIR), the staff should modify the collection plan to account for new information requirements or modified CCIR and to redirect efforts to collect additional information. The commander and staff must continuously review IPB products against the current situation; they redirect the scout platoon or other ISR assets to focus on the most important unknowns remaining, emphasizing the current CCIR. The task force commander must balance his need for information with the ability of the scout platoon to gather it, the risk to the scout platoon during collection, the ability to sustain

the scout platoon over time and distance, the requirement to have the scout platoon available at critical times and places to support the decisive action, and the availability (time, type, and quantity) of other ISR assets.

3-22. SECURITY

Security during preparation prevents surprise and reduces uncertainty through local security and operational security (OPSEC). Local security and OPSEC prevent the enemy from discovering the task force plan and protect the force from unforeseen enemy actions. The goal in conducting security operations is to prevent the enemy from gathering essential elements of friendly information (EEFI). Security is a dynamic effort that anticipates and prevents enemy intelligence-gathering efforts.

3-23. FORCE PROTECTION

Force protection includes a combination of active and passive measures to deter, defeat, or mitigate enemy actions. It is not a discrete mission assigned to a single subordinate unit but a continuous effort executed by the task force and all of its subordinate units regardless of their mission, location, or threat. The commander and staff develop and initiate actions during planning but conduct the actions during preparation and execution.

3-24. PLAN REVISION AND REFINEMENT

The task force commander adjusts plans based on new information. The enemy is also acting while the task force is preparing for an upcoming operation. As assumptions prove true or false, as the scout platoon (or other ISR assets) confirms or denies enemy actions and dispositions, and as the status of subordinate units change, the task force commander determines whether the new information invalidates the plan, requires him to adjust the plan, or validates his plan.

3-25. COORDINATION AND LIAISON

During preparation, the task force conducts necessary coordination with higher, lower, adjacent, and supporting units. Coordination includes the establishment of all communication links to guarantee continuous contact during execution and may include sending and receiving liaison teams. This is especially critical when the task force is a subordinate element of an organization that lacks the same INFOSYS (digital or analog) and when units who lack the same INFOSYS are subordinated to the task force. Coordination is essential for synchronization during execution.

a. **Coordination.** Exchanging information is critical to successful coordination. Coordination may be both internal and external. Internal coordination occurs within the task force staff. External coordination involves subordinate and supporting units or staffs and higher headquarters. Coordination has four objectives.

(1) It ensures an understanding of the commander's intent and an understanding of subordinate and supporting unit roles.

(2) It ensures that all affected and interested personnel have been consulted or informed so they may respond as desired or adjust their plans and actions.

(3) It avoids conflict and duplication of effort among subordinate units, reducing the risk of fratricide and the expenditure of resources.

(4) It ensures that the commander and staff consider all relevant factors and effectively employ all available assets.

b. **Liaison.** Liaison provides a means of direct communications between headquarters. Liaison may begin with planning and continue throughout preparation and execution.

3-26. REHEARSALS

The intent of a rehearsal is to practice actions to improve performance during execution. The extent of rehearsals depends on the time available. Rehearsals allow participants to become familiar with the plan and to translate the plan into a visual impression that orients them to the environment and other units when executing. Rehearsals imprint a mental picture of the sequence of key actions within the upcoming operation. Rehearsals also provide a forum for coordination among subordinate and supporting leaders. Rehearsals emphasize times, locations, and solutions for coordinating actions to achieve synchronization at critical points during execution. The battalion's leadership rehearses the plan against a wide range of likely enemy COAs that cause the task force to execute various maneuver options at different times and locations. The goal is to exercise the battalion's C2 system and subordinate commanders against potential situations that may arise during execution and force decision-making under the anticipated conditions of the battle. This promotes flexibility and agility while reinforcing the commander's intent. The commander seeks to rehearse the operation from initiation to occupation of the final objective or limit of advance (LOA). Often, due to time constraints, the commander prioritizes the maneuver options and enemy COAs to be rehearsed based on the time available. The focus of the rehearsal is locating the enemy, developing the situation, executing a maneuver option, and exploiting success. The rehearsal must consider the potential of encountering stationary or moving enemy forces.

Section VI. EXECUTION

Execution is putting a plan into action by applying combat power to accomplish the mission using situational understanding to assess progress and make decisions. Inherent in the dynamic nature of execution is deciding to execute planned actions as well as deciding to adjust the plan based on changes in the situation. Combining the art of command and the science of control is most evident during execution. The commander exercises judgment and intuition continuously, assessing the situation and making decisions, often with incomplete, conflicting, and vague information. During execution, the commander uses his visualization, continuously updated with a current COP, to assess the progress of operations. His CCIR, continuously updated during the operation, guides updates to his situational understanding. Decision-making during execution follows the Assess, Decide, and Direct model with the MDMP at its core.

3-27. THE COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM DURING EXECUTION

During execution, the C2 system (paragraph 3-5) must continuously manage relevant information. It must compare the COP against the commander's intent, identify variances from the plan, and recommend ways for the commander to correct or exploit the variances. Finally, the C2 system must direct actions to counter unforeseen enemy or friendly actions and to exploit opportunities.

3-28. ADAPTING TO CHANGES

There are two methods for the task force to adapt to changes. The first method begins during planning and consists of anticipating changes and developing branches and sequels to the plan to deal with them. Anticipating changes does not end with planning; it continues throughout preparation and execution. The second method of adapting to changes is improvising, taking action, or adopting solutions to unforeseen changes during the operation. While improvisation is not the preferred method, situations frequently arise requiring its use. The real difference between the two methods is time. Anticipation occurs when enemy actions are foreseen early enough to develop an analytical response. Improvisation occurs when the enemy action is unexpected and does not allow time for the formal planning of a response.

3-29. ASSESSMENT

Assessing an operation during execution is an essential and continuous task. It is a deliberate comparison of previously templated outcomes to actual events, using the commander's criteria for success to judge operational success at any point during the operation. The commander and staff assess the probable outcomes of the ongoing operation to determine whether changes are required to accomplish the mission, to react to unforeseen threats, or to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. The commander uses situational understanding to assess the ongoing operation to determine if the current plan is (or is not) still valid.

a. **Monitoring the Operation.** The commander and staff monitor the ongoing operation to determine if it is progressing satisfactorily according to the current plan (including any FRAGO that may have modified it). The staff monitors the various facts and assumptions that were the basis of the plan to ensure these remain valid or to see a need for new facts and assumptions that might affect current and future operations. Monitoring uses RI to develop a clear understanding of the current state of the task force in relation to the enemy and the environment. The staff processes this RI and presents it to the commander as a clear operational picture.

b. **Evaluating the Criteria for Success.** The commander and staff continue to evaluate the commander's criteria for success during execution. The staff must continually update their staff estimates and their sources of assessment to supplement and support the commander's visualization. Assessing success results in one of two outcomes.

(1) The operation is progressing satisfactorily and observed variances between expectations and the current situation are minor or within acceptable levels. Progress meets the commander's intent, and the concept of operations is still relevant to the situation. The result is that the operation continues as planned and leads to decisions foreseen by the plan.

(2) The operation as a whole is not proceeding according to expectations. The observed variances endanger the success of the operation. This assessment can result from unforeseen enemy successes or friendly failures, and it also can result if performance of critical indicators is much better than expected, presenting a significant opportunity to the task force. The commander makes a decision to eliminate the threat or to take advantage of the unforeseen opportunity.

3-30. DECISIONS

The task force commander should be ready to modify his plan if it is necessary to save the force, to accomplish the mission, or to achieve greater success. Adhering to a plan when the situation has changed can waste resources and opportunities. The flexibility to adapt to changing situations is the hallmark of a good commander. The task force must train to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities and to leverage the available INFOSYS to disseminate decisions quickly. The commander makes two basic types of decisions during execution: execution decisions and adjustment decisions.

a. **Execution Decisions.** Execution decisions implement anticipated actions and are directed by the order. The most basic form of this type of decision is applying combat power or conducting activities as outlined within the plan or within the commander's intent. Executing branches and sequels are execution decisions (Figure 3-5, page 3-30).

(1) **Critical Routine Functions.** The task force must accomplish routine tasks during execution. Although these tasks occur routinely, the commander must consciously consider them during execution. Failure to consider these routine tasks can waste resources, squander opportunities, or lead to mission failure.

(a) *Conduct Continuous ISR Operations.* ISR is a continuous process, feeding the commander's situational understanding and his decision-making. The task force commander should never keep the scout platoon and other ISR assets in reserve. During execution, these assets should be focused on answering the CCIR and looking for opportunities for the task force to exploit.

(b) *Adjust IR and CCIR Based on the Situation.* The commander and staff must continue to review the CCIR during execution. The staff continues to analyze IR against the mission and updated commander's intent to identify those indicators that may directly affect the commander's decision-making. As CCIR are answered or the situation changes, the commander must develop new CCIR. The staff must disseminate these new CCIR to subordinate and supporting units. The staff must develop a new collection plan and allocate assets (scout platoon or other ISR assets) to answer the new CCIR.

(c) *Track the Battle.* Battle tracking is monitoring designated elements of the COP that are tied to the commander's criteria for success. Battle tracking requires special attention from all staff officers. The XO and S3 must continue to monitor the progress of movement and recommend changes as required.

(d) *Refine the Targeting Process.* The commander's decisions provide the basis for targeting decisions made in support of the continuing operation. The commander remains alert to situations when he must give or modify targeting guidance to the staff. His guidance synchronizes the targeting process to continue achieving effects (lethal and or nonlethal) on the enemy.

(e) *Manage the Movement and Positioning of CS and CSS Units.* Massing the effects of combat power at a decisive point requires not only the maneuver of combat forces but also the movement of CS and CSS forces. CS and CSS forces must not interfere with the movement of combat forces to the decisive point. In the heat of executing a mission, it is easy to lose sight of the time required to reposition CS and CSS forces. The commander and staff must ensure that the movement of combat units does not outpace the movement of CS and CSS units. The commander's visualization should include the time required to move all task force assets to get to the right place at the right time.

(f) *Continue Terrain Management*. The task force must carefully track the location and land utilization of all units within the area of operations. Deconflicting land use among units in the task force area of operations is difficult but necessary during execution. The staff must ensure that adequate space, including the use of routes, is available at the right time to support critical activities. The commander's visualization should determine what space is required for what force at what time to support the decisive action.

(2) **Planned Actions**. The commander or staff must recognize that a particular event or action directed by the OPOD has met preconditions (events or triggers) for execution and direct the execution of this planned action. Modifying planned actions to fit the current situation is still considered a planned action. Branches and sequels to an order (or plan) are planned actions.

b. **Adjustment Decisions**. Adjustment decisions modify the plan to respond to unanticipated threats or opportunities. Typically, a commander's adjustment decision requires further synchronization across the BOS. The commander describes his visualization of the adjustment through additional guidance. He must pay particular attention to the effects of adjustment decisions on targeting and give sufficient guidance to support the targeting process. Adjustments take one of three forms: reallocation of resources, changing the concept, and changing the mission.

(1) **Reallocation of Resources**. The simplest adjustment is to reallocate resources. The commander can allocate additional combat support or reinforce a combat unit with additional combat forces. The commander should reinforce success if it creates the opportunity for more success.

(2) **Changing the Concept**. Changing the concept of the operation adjusts the way in which the operation is conducted without changing the mission. Most often, this modifies the decisive action to exploit an unforeseen opportunity or to counter an unexpected threat. An important adjustment decision is the commitment of the reserve. Employing the reserve successfully requires anticipation and visualization. These allow the commander to task-organize, position, and move the reserve force in a manner that minimizes any loss of momentum with their commitment.

(3) **Changing the Mission**. If the commander sees during execution that he cannot resolve a problem to accomplish his mission by reallocating resources or changing the concept, he may opt to change his mission. He should only do this as a last resort, and the change to the mission must still accomplish the higher commander's intent. Synchronizing the task force's new actions is the greatest problem this type of decision presents.

(4) **Adjustment Decision Methods**. When making adjustments to a unique or complex situation, the MDMP is preferred if time is available. When there is not sufficient time for the MDMP or during fast-paced combat operations, decision-making may become more intuitive for the commander. Intuitive (or recognition) decision-making emphasizes the commander's knowledge, judgment, experience, education, intellect, boldness, perception, and character.

(a) *Using the MDMP*. The commander may opt to use an abbreviated MDMP, focusing the staff on one course of action. This method also uses intuitive decision-making. It begins with the commander using his current situational understanding to visualize and mentally formulate a single course of action that solves the unforeseen

problem. He directs the staff to analyze and refine the COA. The commander resolves any inadequacies the staff detects through its analysis by revising or modifying the given course of action rather than developing a new one.

(b) *Recognition Decisions.* This type of decision-making requires the greatest involvement of the commander and the least involvement from the staff. It relies on the commander's experience in the use of intuitive decision-making to be successful. The commander visualizes the solution to a problem immediately, with little or no analysis of alternatives or outcomes. Recognition decisions do not necessarily follow the MDMP; however, the commander's decisions are well grounded in an understanding of the enemy and terrain, the updated commander's estimate and staff estimates, and the OPORD that began the operation (Figure 3-6, page 3-31). This approach focuses on situational understanding, assessing significant variances, and selecting or refining an acceptable decision mentally instead of comparing multiple options to select the optimal answer.

3-31. DIRECTING ACTION

Any decision to change a plan requires a change in the application of combat power and a resynchronization to mass effects on the enemy. The task force commander must direct action that applies combat power to effect execution or adjustment decisions. The FRAGO is the normal means to direct changes during execution. Digital INFOSYS give the C2 system the capability to automate orders (and graphics) production and dissemination, especially for execution.

a. **Synchronize Operations.** After the task force commander makes a decision during execution, his staff must resynchronize the ongoing operation to maximize the application of combat power against the enemy. This resynchronization includes informing subordinates, integrating assets, incorporating the decision into the targeting process, and deconflicting subordinate actions. The staff can use digital INFOSYS to reduce duplication, confusion, and problems that may occur from the change. Resynchronization should be used only to the extent required to ensure mission accomplishment. Excessive synchronization may waste valuable resources and opportunities.

b. **Maintain Continuity.** Continuity (making as few changes as necessary) allows for a greater chance of successful execution. Continuity does not inhibit flexibility; the task force commander and his staff should only make the changes to current operations necessary to solve a problem. Maintaining the current plan as much as possible allows subordinates to focus on only a few discrete changes. The commander and staff should avoid changes that may preclude options for future operations.

3-32. TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE

The ability to accomplish unit tasks successfully lies in the training level of the soldiers and the leaders' mastery of the leader tasks. The entire unit, if equipped with digital INFOSYS, must learn new procedures to acquire the full advantage of digitization once they have mastered the analog methodology.

a. Digitization's largest impact is on the commanders and leaders in the practice of command and control. Integrating this new digitized equipment into the operations process poses a challenging problem for future commanders and leaders.

b. Executing battle drills or any other type of operation using new, digitized equipment and procedures at first seems more difficult and dangerous than existing methods. It is imperative that commanders, leaders, and soldiers understand both the advantages and the limiting factors of digitization and apply the advantages while overcoming the initial complicating difficulties. Adapting to digital INFOSYS will be a continuing process for commanders as new equipment and processes are tested, proven, and fielded to combat units.

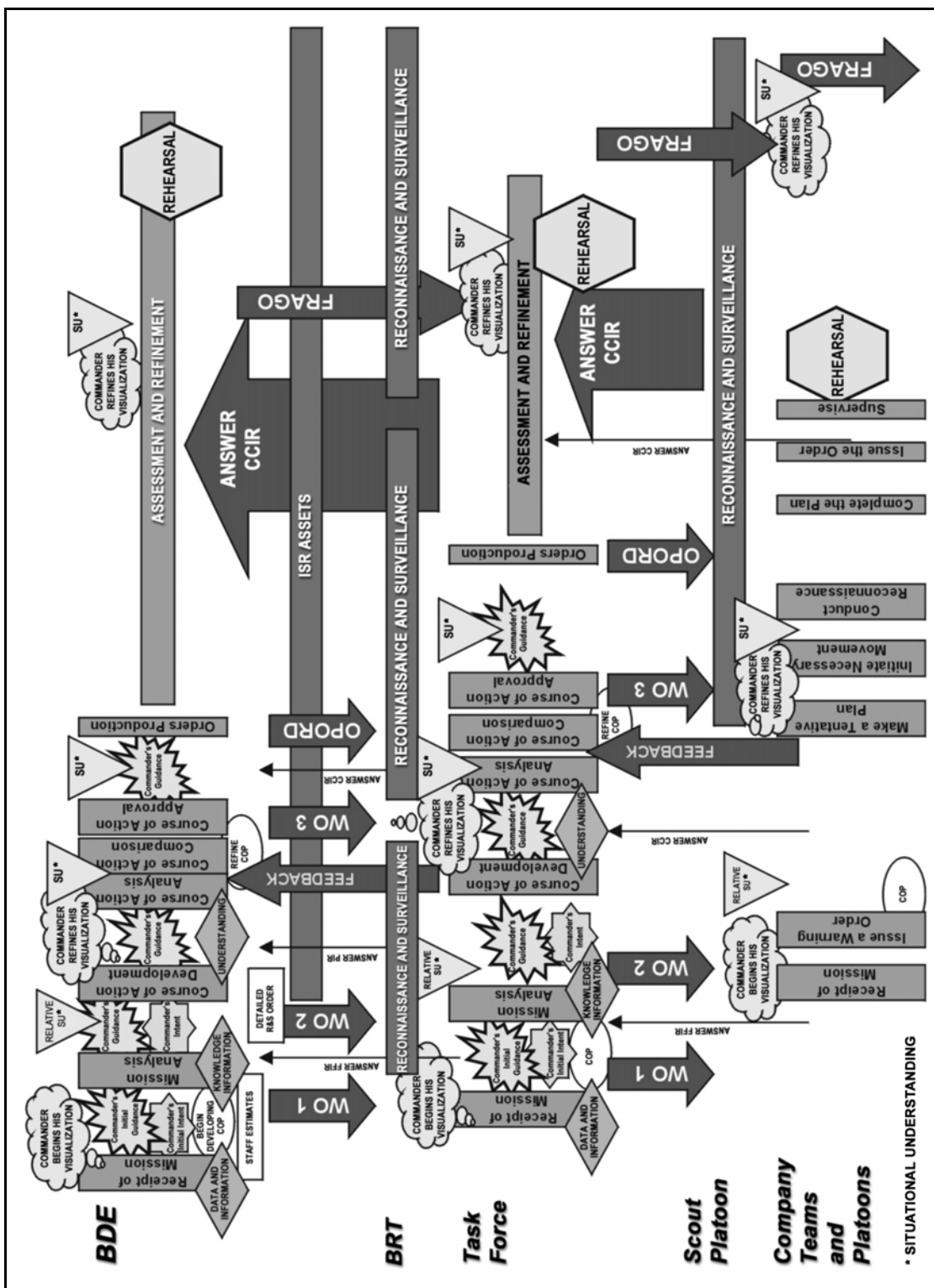


Figure 3-5. The steps in the MDMP.

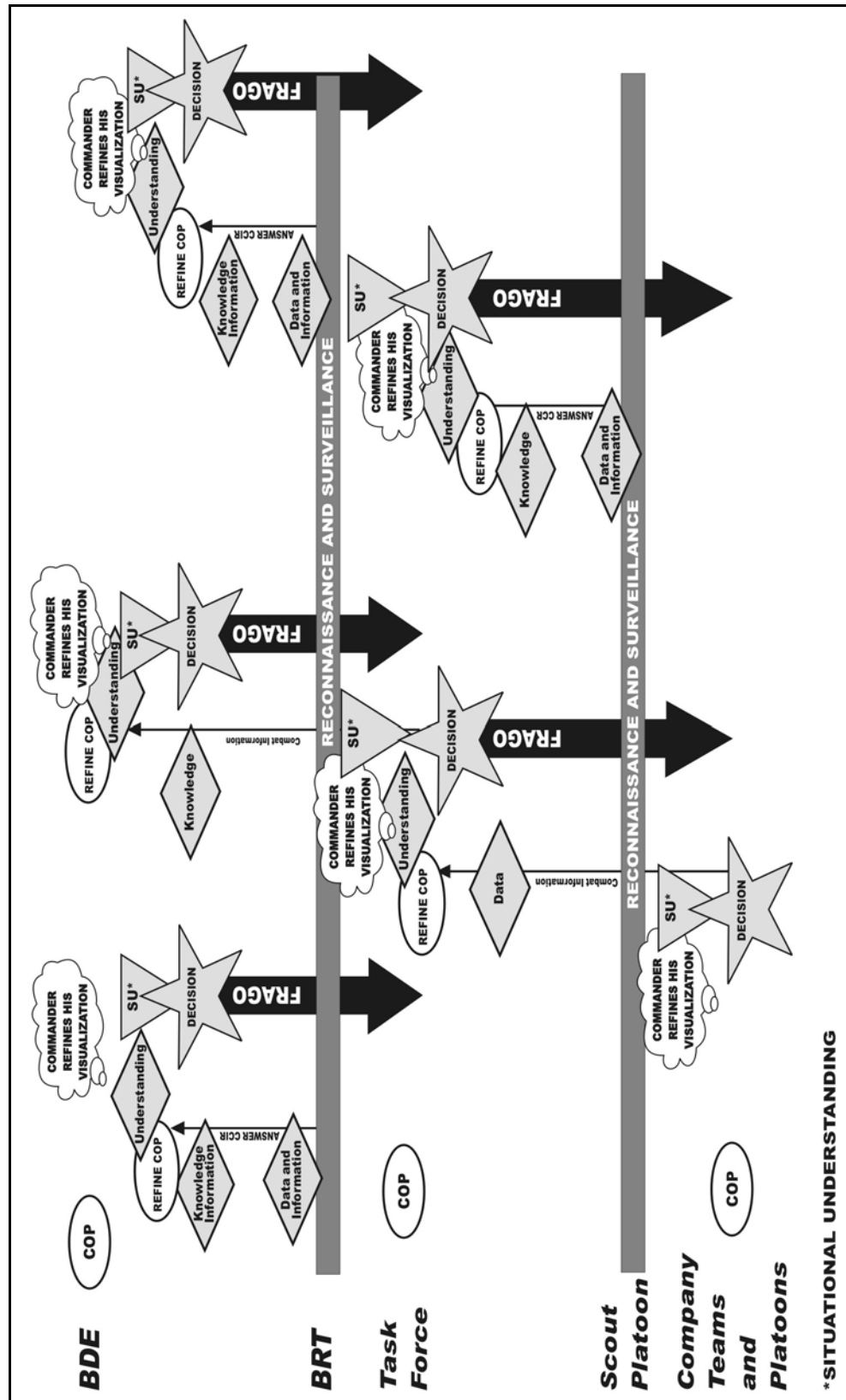


Figure 3-6. Executing an operation.